



Southwest Counseling Solutions

Answers for a healthy community

September 19, 2007

Mary Levine
Director of Legal Affairs
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
735 East Lansing
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Re: Michigan's Qualified Allocation Plan

Dear Ms. Levine,

Southwest Counseling Solutions fully supports the proposed changes to Michigan's Qualified Allocation Plan. The Plan's emphasis and special attention to those most in need - those who are homeless, those who are disabled and those whose income and/or disability puts them at risk of homelessness, clearly aligns the QAP with Michigan's 5 Year Affordable Housing Community Action Plan, with Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness and with the housing goals of Detroit's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

We believe that the QAP is sound public policy. We believe the requirements outlined in the Plan will leverage support and resources from other public partners in the mainstream services system; that it will stimulate investment from the private sector and from foundations; that it will create partnerships and encourage collaborations; that it will result in creative solutions and most importantly, that it will produce good housing outcomes.

At Southwest Counseling alone, in the past year, rental assistance support from MSHDA and HUD has leveraged over a million dollars in support service funding from Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency. This initiative has provided permanent housing to over 150 individuals, all of whom were chronically homeless, all of whom have a serious mental illness or substance abuse disorder. To date, 98% of these individuals have been successful tenants, they have remained housed, they have not returned to the shelters or to the streets.

This success is being replicated across our community as my colleagues in the development and support services community begin to implement projects designed to serve homeless families, homeless youth, homeless victims of domestic violence and foster care youth who have aged out of the system. In Detroit alone, over the next two years, as new low income tax credit projects and special initiatives come on line, we fully expect that we will triple and perhaps quadruple the number of permanent housing units available to those who are homeless and those with disabling conditions.

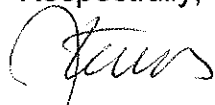


This combination of affordable housing and support services, the permanent supportive housing model, is recognized nationally as a best practice and a viable solution to ending homelessness. We fully support MSHDA's inclusion of permanent supportive housing language as a threshold eligibility requirement for new low income tax credit projects.

Finally, we commend MSHDA for its leadership in encouraging housing development for those most in need and for its efforts in ensuring that all communities develop viable plans to end homelessness in Michigan.

We strongly urge you to approve the Draft QAP.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tardella", written over a faint circular stamp.

Joseph Tardella
Executive Director
Southwest Counseling Solutions